

Testimony
Health Services Interim Committee
Sen. Judy Lee, Chairman
10.24.17

Chairman Lee and Members of the Health Services Interim Committee, I am Roxane Romanick. I am here today to represent a planning committee that is working a summit focused on our North Dakota Early Intervention system. I am a part of this planning committee through my work with Designer Genes of North Dakota and as a parent whose child and family benefitted from the system starting 18 years ago.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for passing SB 2325, which contained the study and for choosing to understand the importance of the North Dakota Early Intervention system by choosing the study. Thank you for including me on the agenda today to update on the work of the planning committee.

I'd like to give you some background on who has been involved in promoting SB 2325, why, and how that has lead us to this point. A core working group was formed over a year ago around bringing some light to the growing concern that more and more of the federal Part C grant was being used up for Direct Services thus leaving less and less for the coordinating efforts such as our state's Right Track program, professional development of our staff, the hiring of Experienced Parents, and adequate administration of the program. This group was made up of parents and providers. The group threw a statewide birthday party for the 30th anniversary of the passage of IDEA Part C in July 2016. Some of the same group continued to discuss the fiscal situation of the Part C system through a subcommittee of the ND Interagency Coordinating Council (NDICC). When a decision was made to ask for assistance from the ND Legislature to address ongoing concerns, a stakeholder group called Friends of ND Early Intervention was split off from the NDICC action and worked with Sen. Poolman, Sen. Dever, Rep. Meier, and Rep. Seibel to produce SB 2325.

To form the planning committee to bring together individuals, we put out an ask to members of the Friends of ND Early Intervention stakeholder group, included Tina Bay, Amanda Carlson and Chris Jones from the Department of Human Services, and assured that we had a strong cross-section of parents and providers. The members of the planning committee are included below:

Members	Role
Moe Schroeder	Parent, Family Support provider, Serves on NDICC
Stef Kaiser	Provider
Cathy Haarstad	Parent, Family Support provider
Bruce Murry	Representing Providers
Eric Monson	Provider
Roxane Romanick	Parent, Family Support provider
Layla Alkire	Parent
Tina Bay	DHS, serves on the NDICC
Chris Jones	DHS
Jill Staudinger	Provider, Serves on the NDICC

Chris Pieske	Parent, Serves on the NDICC
Missi Baranko	Parent, Early Childhood provider
Becky Matthews	Parent, Family Support provider
Stacey Miller	Provider
Stephanie Nelson	Provider
Sarah Carlson	Parent, Family support provider, serves on the NDICC
Amanda Carlson	DHS, Part C Coordinator

In the process of planning, we have also attempted to update the members of the original Friends of ND Early Intervention group, the NDICC, and the Infant Development Providers Affiliate Group (formed through the ND Association of Community Providers).

The planning committee has drafted and is proposing the following purpose statement for the Early Intervention Solutions Summit:

- To create a shared vision for a ND system of support, in concert with their families, for infants and toddlers (Birth to 3) with special health care needs, delays, and potential delays and/or disabilities due to their diagnosis by:
 - Understanding the full implications of participation in the federal Part C program
 - Gaining shared awareness of other state models, strategies, challenges, and strengths for Part C delivery systems and funding methods
 - Focusing on system characteristics that promote quality outcomes for our state's children and families.
 - Increasing the number of stakeholders in North Dakota that understand the unique strengths and challenges of ND's EI system
- To use that shared vision to
 - Uncover potential efficiencies, collaborations, and resources that are not currently being capitalized upon that will strengthen services for young children and their families.
 - Find alternative funding strategies needed to implement the shared vision and guard against any potential funding threats.
 - Prepare and present prioritized recommendations to the Interim Health Services Committee for the SB 2325 Study

The planning committee has engaged the assistance of Maureen Greer and Ron Benham from Emerald Consulting to assist with work of the summit. Maureen Greer is presently the Executive Director of the Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA). She was the past Part C Coordinator for the state of Indiana. Ron Benham is the past chair and founding member of the ITCA Board of Director. He

currently serves as the Director of Family Health and Nutrition for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In this role, he serves as the Part C Coordinator for the state of Massachusetts. Both Maureen and Ron have been involved in facilitating a Fiscal Initiative for a cohort of state Part C systems. North Dakota participated in this effort in 2014. In addition to Ron and Maureen coming to present content information, Mike Meagher from Sagency Consulting has been contracted to facilitate and assist in summarizing the work of the summit.

The Solutions Summit will be held on Wednesday, November 29th at the HIT Building in Mandan, ND from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Preparation work will take place on Tuesday, November 28th with the assistance of the consultants and then summarizing work will occur on the 30th. A list of 80 stakeholders have been identified to be invited. In creating the list, we felt that we needed to be intentional in bringing families who have or have had children in Early Intervention. The goal is to assure that at least 30% of the participants are families. Additionally, we've included the members of the NDICC, which includes several state agency partners, legislators, providers, state Developmental Disabilities staff, and additional early childhood partners. We are continuing to recruit participants that are representative of our state population and have a vested interest in ND's Early Intervention system.

Presently, we have secured funding for the Solutions Summit from providers, family support organizations, and are pursuing a small innovation grant from the ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities. We have in-kind donations on the meeting space and staff time.

It is the planning committee's hope that we will be able to provide basic demographic information about the current ND system through a variety of methods prior to the summit, so that we don't have to waste time reviewing the basics. A small subcommittee is working on this. While the agenda is still draft, we are planning on the following activities:

- Family-based Dream Work: Using Family Scenarios and Considerations to drive discussions about best practices for children and families.
- A presentation by Maureen Greer and Ron Benham on meeting the intent of the federal law, trends in funding strategies, and state models that have maximized resources and collaborations.
- System Framework Group Work: Using the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center's framework (see attached). http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/pubs/ecta-system_framework.pdf
- Prioritization work by summit attendees.

It is our hope to have a summary of the work available for you in early 2018.

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Purpose and Audience

Building and sustaining high-quality early intervention and preschool special education systems is a complex and ongoing process for state agencies. To support states, the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA Center), funded by The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), has developed a framework that addresses the question, “What does a state need to put into place in order to encourage/support/require local implementation of evidence-based practices that result in positive outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families?”

The purpose of the ECTA System Framework is to guide state Part C and Section 619 Coordinators and their staff in: (1) evaluating their current systems; (2) identifying potential areas for improvement, and; (3) developing more effective, efficient systems that support implementation of evidence-based practices. States vary significantly in their Part C and Section 619 service delivery systems and the framework was developed to accommodate this variation. It is intended to enhance the capacity of Part C and Section 619 state staff to:

- Understand the characteristics of an effective service system;
- Lead or actively participate in system improvement efforts, including cross-sector work; and
- Build more effective systems of services and programs that will improve outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families served under Part C and Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Structure of the Framework

The ECTA System Framework is organized around six interrelated components:

- Governance (GV);
- Finance (FN);
- Personnel/Workforce (PN);
- Data System (DS);
- Accountability & Quality Improvement (AC), and;
- Quality Standards (QS)

Each component contains a set of subcomponents that identify key areas of content within the component. Each subcomponent contains a set of quality indicators that specify what needs to be in place to support a high-quality Part C/Section 619 system.

